Michele Jarosch

Adolescent Literature TED 707

Dr. Mary Wright

Link to Wiki: http://michelejarosch.wikispaces.com

Coming into this class and being confronted with the technology was daunting, at first. We all needed to create our own websites. Within those websites we needed to include three projects that we had to create through the semester based on our choice piece of literature. Our websites and projects were just part of the New Literacies class, we also had five pieces of literature we read and responded by creating new literacies. What are new literacies? New literacies “encompasses reading, writing, and a variety of social and intellectual practices that call upon the voice as well as the eye and the hand … including non-digitalized multimedia, digitized multimedia, and hypertext or hypermedia” ( Kajder, 2010). Many believe it is about technology alone but it is so much more that.

As daunting as all this seemed to be it is very important to learn and get experience using new literacies. Since it is critical that as a teacher it is our responsibility to prepare students to be able to use the tools needed with new literacies to successfully support their leaning. “One must know how to navigate nonlinear text, repeatedly evaluate resources, sift through extraneous materials, infer meaning, and use a range of features to compose unified messages” (Bezemer & Kress, 2008). As teachers this is an important aspect since students can access blogs, wikis, social networking sites, instant messenger, multiplayer online games, and a multitude of other activities all day every day. It is important, as teachers to teach students the skills and adapt our lessons for students needs to survive and thrive within the technology environment our world has embraced.

Creating our own digital website for this class created a new meaning of new literacies. Having to get hands on and actually create the literacies, along with the website, really deepened my understanding of new literacies and how they can be incorporated within a classroom and meet the Common Core Standards.

Take for example our first project. After reading Smile by Raina Telgemeier we were required to create a Thematic Braiding using Google doc presentation. Not only did we have the technology component of Google doc, and Flickr (making sure they were creative commons) there was also the writing component. While we wrote we had to identify themes, determine the genre, sight evidence from the text that supported the theme, sight a personal connection and a world connection. Lastly, you had to find another text that had this theme within the story as well. Students use their current knowledge from reading the story and also draw on prior knowledge for the personal connection and text-text connection. This project has students thinking critically to cite and support their theme. Using Google Docs allows students the opportunity to connect with other students. It allows students the opportunity to connect themselves with the finished project online and allows for peer comments and reacts to each others work.

A Thematic Braiding is very engaging and enriching, as teachers we are expected to meet standards, many don’t believe that New Literacies can meet the Common Core Standards. A few Common Core standards for Thematic Braidings include; [RL.8.2](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RL/8/2/) Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text., RL.[7.2](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RL/7/2/) Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text., [RL.8.4](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RL/8/4/) Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts., [RL.7.6](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RL/7/6/) Analyze how an author develops and contrasts the points of view of different characters or narrators in a text. These are only a few examples from the seventh and eight grade common core, which if asked by the district, Principal or parent, would support how Thematic Braidings meet the standards.

Project two we delved a bit deeper, taking baby steps, into adding different aspects of new literacies. Our second project was a Character Sketch Journal based of the book Wonder by R.J. Palacio. For this project we used VoiceThreads. The purpose of this project is for students to represent their understanding of the literature through the use of images and text. Through the character of our choice we were able to portray theme and to express what we understood of what was going on during parts of the story. Instead of just typing out what we understood we laid out our images that portrayed what was going on and than laid audio tracks from the view of our character.

Meeting the Common Core when it comes to our Character Sketch Journal is not a stretch at all. Just a few examples are; RL 6.3-Describe how a particular story’s or drama’s plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution., RL 6.5-Analyze how a particular sentence, chapter, scene, or stanza fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the theme, setting, or plot., RL 6.7-Compare and contrast the experience of reading a story, drama, or poem to listening to or viewing an audio, video, or live version of the text, including contrasting what they “see” and “hear” when reading the text to what they perceive when they listen or watch.

In meeting the Common Core Standards for project three we used poetry. For this project we used the book Dead End In Norvelt by Jack Gantos. We didn’t create just any old poetry we created digital poetry. Poetry allows students many ways to read many different poems that are at their level or above their level even. They can pull many meanings from a poem, since a poem can be subjective. Writing and reading poetry is not all about understanding the authors meaning. But allowing students to pull their own meaning from the poem, it allows students to put their ideas and thoughts into a form that may be easier for them to express themselves. For digital poetry we wrote a poem, based on literature we had completed for class. Bring these poems to class we were able to peer edit the work. Keeping in mind while writing the poetry you had to consider how you were going to phrase, images that you would use, would you narrate with voice or just type text, if you felt comfortable you could add video. Through the music, poem, narration we are able to express what we learned. Also along with how you felt and are able to share this with peers as well as teachers.

With digital poetry the Common Core doesn’t have a chance. A couple standards are; RL 7.1 Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text., RL 7.5 Analyze the structure an author uses to organize a text, including how the major sections contribute to the whole and to the development of the ideas.,RL 7. 7 Compare and contrast a text to an audio, video, or multimedia version of the text, analyzing each medium’s portrayal of the subject (e.g., how the delivery of a speech affects the impact of the words).

Our final project concluded with incorporating all the baby steps we learned along the way, images, text, music, and now video. Using persuasive writing we created Public Service Announcements (PSA). There is a lot to consider while writing the PSA, who is the audience, what are you trying to argue, and what is the best way to convey this message. This project can be a solo project or a cooperative project. One student would be assigned to write the script another finds images, while another decides the storyboard. The main purpose of the PSA is for students to think critically about the main theme of the story and to portray that themes message within the PSA.

All of the projects we completed and created required a rubric. A rubric is a set expectation for the lesson that you expect student’s to meet. When creating your rubric you need to keep every student in mind, as all students have different levels that they will achieve. The rubric sets it up that all students, if they put the work in can achieve a top score. As a teacher in the middle school it is really important to include many facets into the lessons and to allow students the opportunities to show you, in the way they work best, that they understand the assignment and can take it to that next level. Many teachers balk at technology, because they don’t understand it or don’t like it and don’t have time to learn how to use it. But in order to teach to elementary and middle school students we need to be technological savvy or at least allow students to embrace technology and grade according to rubric, what they have created.

“Traditional conceptions of print-based literacy do not apprehend the richness and complexity of actual literacy practices in people’s lives enabled by new technologies that both magnify and simplify access to and creation of multimodal texts” (Kajder, 2010) – Print doesn’t have the richness that the multimodal texts provides. With this statement comes the idea the print is linear, you read right to left, mainly. Multimodal is a non-linear model. When you go to a website you can get here than come back and than go here or there all at the click of a button.

“Internet activities tend to use an inquiry-based model, requiring students to solve problems or answer questions” (Leu, Leu, & Coiro, 2004). “Research tells us that this model demands a set of skills different from those needed for traditional reading comprehension activities” (Leu et al, 2009).

New literacies are more than just the technology. New literacies are taking what teachers have been teaching for generations, reading and writing and using them as a trigger for innovative and creative thought, sparking critical thinking and problem solving and making it all come alive. Students use many forms to present their projects; wikis, iMovie, Wevideo, Windows movie maker, YouTube, Google Docs and they are able to present them within the classroom to peers, to classrooms across the world and at home to their family and friends. As future teachers we need to look at our students and value literacies they bring into the classroom. As Kadjer stated in her text we need to “… grow in order to successfully do the work we value, helping students to work as intentional, self-directed learners who skillfully construct meaning from and with a range of texts and share that knowledge and understanding in meaningful ways”(p.98).

Reference

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